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FOR WHA/CAN AND INR/B

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [CA](#)

SUBJECT: LIBERALS SWEEP TO POWER IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND PROVINCIAL  
ELECTION

REF: HALIFAX 0025

11. SUMMARY: In a surprisingly easy win, PEI Liberals ended 11 years of Tory rule in the May 28 provincial election. Robert Ghiz and the Liberals took 23 of the province's 27 districts, leaving the once mighty Tories with the remaining four. The New Democratic Party and the Green party again failed to elect a member. Ghiz and his Liberals will take power on June 13. Post does not foresee the new government changing any policies that could affect relations with the United States. Ghiz will now take over from Binns as this year's host of the annual Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers scheduled for June 25-26 in PEI. END SUMMARY

12. Prince Edward Island Liberals, under leader Robert Ghiz, crushed the incumbent Tory Government of Premier Pat Binns in the May 28 provincial election. Ghiz, the 33-year old son of a popular former premier, took the public and his opponents by surprise in capturing 23 of the Legislature's 27 seats. The Tories, now the official opposition, were left with just four and the NDP and Green parties again were not able to elect a member. The results exactly reversed the PC and Liberal standings in the Legislature before Binns called the election on April 30. Although Binns retained his own seat, the election results were a crushing personal defeat for Binns who had been seeking an unprecedented fourth mandate.

13. Throughout the campaign our Island contacts had predicted that the electorate was in the mood for a change, but even Ghiz himself acknowledged that the margin of victory was more than he and his party had anticipated. Added to this was the perception that the Tories were getting desperate and had resorted to making expensive and ill-conceived spending announcements with no explanation of how to pay for them. Just what Binns did and did not do on the campaign trail will certainly be the main topic of post-electoral discussion across the Island in the weeks and months ahead, especially the question of whether Binns will be staying on to lead his party from the Opposition benches. For now the focus is on Premier-Elect Ghiz as he puts together his transition team for his swearing in as premier on June 13. Given that the Liberal platform also contained some expensive promises, a review of the province's fiscal situation will no doubt be the first order of business. Ghiz will have an early, high-visibility opportunity to shine when he hosts the annual Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers scheduled for June 25-26 in PEI. (Comment: As post reported reftel, Ghiz and Binns share much of the same political philosophies and we do not expect to see Ghiz make any significant changes in PEI policy that could affect relations with the United States. End comment)

14. Post will transmit a bio report on Robert Ghiz via septel.

FOSTER